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SUBJECT: DRC ELECTIONS: EU MISSION DECLARES VOTE MANAGED
EFFICIENTLY

¶1. (U) The European Union's Election Observation Mission (MOEUE) released August 2 its preliminary statement on the DRC's July 30 elections, noting that the Independent Electoral Commission (CEI) managed the vote "efficiently" despite political tension and certain inequalities observed during the electoral campaign. MOEUE observed that the elections took place in an peaceful and relatively calm climate which resulted in a remarkable level of participation by the Congolese. On the whole, the Observation Mission gave a positive evaluation of voting operations. The Mission noted, however, that many last-minute changes to voting procedures were not consistently followed by poll workers, which could as yet have an undetermined effect on results. The MOEUE noted as well the unequal access to media and the monopolization of resources by members of the transitional government to the detriment of their opponents. The MOEUE encouraged the CEI to redouble its efforts to explain fully and clearly the entire electoral process so as to avoid further misunderstandings and confusion among voters. The EU Observer Mission, which deployed some 300 observers throughout the country, continues to monitor the vote counting and compilation process, and will issue a final evaluation.

¶2. (U) Post's unofficial translation of the MOEUE's summary statement from the original French follows:

At the invitation of the CEI, and taking account of the importance of the importance of these elections for the success of the transition process in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) and the stabilization of the Great Lakes region, the European Commission, in conjunction with the member States of the European Union decided to deploy an electoral observation mission (MOEUE) in order to observe the presidential, legislative and provincial elections in ¶2006. Present in the DRC since June 9, 2006, the MOEUE was led by General Phillipe Morillon, member of the European Parliament. The MOEUE operates conforming to the Declaration of principles for the international observation of elections of October 27, 2005. With a total of 300 observers coming from Member States of the European Union as well as Norway, Switzerland and Canada, this mission constitutes the largest election observation team ever deployed by the European Union. A delegation of 12 members from the European Parliament, led by Jurgen Schroder, member of the European Parliament, allied itself with MOEUE and joins in this present declaration. The observers were deployed throughout the DRC's eleven provinces in order to conduct an exhaustive and documented evaluation of the electoral process. The day of the vote, the observers of the MOEUE visited around 1,200 voting stations. The MOEUE is following the process of the compilation of results in the majority of liaison offices and

will stay in the country to observe the electoral process until its completion. It will then publish its conclusions and detailed recommendations in a final report.

- The presidential and legislative elections of July 30, 2006 were run with efficiency by the Independent Electoral Commission (CEI). They achieved strong voter participation in a generally peaceful climate. By its enthusiasm and with dignity, the Congolese population demonstrated its attachment to the democratic process that must end to a decade of murderous conflicts.

- The holding of these first multi-party elections in the Democratic Republic of Congo in more than 40 years marks the success of a long political transition towards the putting into place new democratically elected institutions and the stabilization of the country.

- The judicial and regulatory framework of these elections satisfies the principles of international standards in terms of democratic elections, despite some deficiencies, notably the regulation of political party financing. Certain regulatory measures were only adopted by the CEI in the final days preceding the vote, sometimes resulting in an unequal application.

- The CEI overcame a major challenge in organizing this election in a country the size of a continent and largely deprived of infrastructure. Taking the lessons of the referendum, the Commission undertook significant improvements in its organization, notably concerning the decentralization and reinforcement of local structures. It must nevertheless redouble its efforts in communications to response to misunderstandings and inherent fears especially concerning

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the exceptional complexity of the process and the size of the technical difficulties encountered.

- Characterized by a profusion of candidacies, this first multi-party electoral campaign was nevertheless marked by a distinct disproportion of means in favor of members of the "Espace Présidentiel," (Note: The president and the four vice presidents. End note.), as well as the hindrance of campaign activities of other candidates. The tense political climate was expressed by the exploitation of themes of exclusion, without however any large-scale security incidents taking place. Numerous attacks on the freedom of the press and intimidation were seen throughout the country.

- The media environment in the DRC offers a plurality and a remarkable freedom of expression. However, a handful of candidates monopolized the electronic media coverage of the campaign. In spite of the courageous decisions in face of the most flagrant violations, the High Media Authority (HAM) did not have the means or the institutional support necessary to accomplish its mandate.

- A large number of civil society organizations mobilized themselves to educate the public regarding the procedures and rules of the referendum, as well as the elections. This concerted effort, associated with the Project for the Support of the Electoral Process in the Congo (APEC/PNUD) to local organizations, was not sufficient in several regions, in particular in the west and center of the country. Information which was made available to the public on the subject of the election was consequently considered insufficient.

- The day of the vote, with the decisive logistical support of MONUC, the CEI was able to open within a reasonable amount of delay a large majority of voting sites. Voting operations and vote-counting were run in an efficient and orderly manner by members of the CEI. Their exemplary devotion, the important mobilization of national observers and witnesses, as well as a generally non-intrusive police force presence contributed to the overall commendable execution of the

elections.

- The observers of the MOEUE noted the unequal application of certain procedures, notably pertaining to the essential controls for the transparency and integrity of the vote. Last-minute adjustments made by the CEI may very well have affected these indispensable guarantees. The evaluation of the effects of these changes requires a detailed and rigorous examination that is a particular object of attention for the MOEUE.

- Deployed in the majority of Local Result Compilation Centers (CLCR), the observers of the MOEUE are making an detailed evaluation of the compilation of results until their completion. This deciding stage of the electoral process must be run with the most clarity and in the most decentralized manner. An element of indispensable transparency, the publication of a breakdown of results to the level of voting stations is the only way to ensure the compatibility of national results and by voting precinct.

End summary text.

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